

*SPEAK NOW: MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA*  
RECORDING SESSIONS

*John C. Taylor, Jr.*

Moderated by LeAnna Welch

Thursday, May 26, 2011

William Winter Archives and History Building  
Jackson, Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
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Participant: Taylor, John C. Jr.

Title: *Speak Now: Memories of the Civil Rights Era* / Memories of John C. Taylor, Jr., Thursday, May 26, 2011/ moderated by LeAnna Welch

Scope Note: The Mississippi Department of Archives and History in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Freedom Rides and to complement the Department's exhibit "*Freedom Rides: Journey for Change*" conducted recording sessions with local citizens to gather oral memories of the Civil Rights Era. The participants were also given the opportunity to have their photograph taken in front of the exhibit. The recordings were conducted in the spring and summer of 2011 at the William F. Winter Archives and History Building in Jackson, Mississippi.

WELCH: Ok, Speak Now recording number 001. This is LeAnna Welch with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Today's date is Thursday, May 26, 2011. Now sharing his memories of the Civil Rights Era is John Taylor.

TAYLOR: Thank you very much. My name is, as she told you, John Charles Taylor, Jr., and I'm in the San Francisco area. And I came through—I was born here in Houston, Texas in 1935 at Herman Hospital. My mother she is a Registered Nurse, licensed by the State of Texas and...and that's it and we moved and relocated.

WELCH: What made you decide to come toward Jackson or to be a Freedom Rider in this way, what were your experiences with that?

TAYLOR: I had no reasons. I just was out there and just wound up, didn't know what I was doing, crazy and talking things and not knowing.

WELCH: Were you in college at the time?

TAYLOR: UC Berkeley and UCLA.

WELCH: Did you and a group of friends come or did you just decide on your own?

TAYLOR: UCLA and UC Berkeley and we transferred stations and got there

WELCH: Was Jackson your only stop?

TAYLOR: Houston, Texas. I'm sorry. I apologize for eating during the interview.

WELCH: That's OK. Did you work while you were in college?

TAYLOR: Newspaper. Oakland Tribune and Berkeley Gazette.

WELCH: Did you do that afterwards?

TAYLOR: Yes.

WELCH: Did you write about your experiences?

TAYLOR: No. I haven't had the opportunity or the desire to really want to.

WELCH: So were you married at the time or were you single?

TAYLOR: Married.

WELCH: How did your wife feel about your adventures?

TAYLOR: Didn't like it terribly. She just wanted to be on her own. And I went off and left her with the kids, and she didn't like that particularly at all so. And it was a bad reputation, a bad rap on, you know the branch, the NAACP itself. I'm trying to think of other things. You can help me.

WELCH: You joined the NAACP in college?

TAYLOR: Yes, at at UCLA I joined and joined there and came down here. And they had projects going and that's how I got on board.

WELCH: You weren't...

TAYLOR: If I had to do it again, I wouldn't be involved, wouldn't do it.

WELCH: Really, why?

TAYLOR: It's just something I wouldn't particularly enjoy and desire.

WELCH: You didn't know what you were getting into?

TAYLOR: No, I had no idea, I was just an old wild kid, we just did these things.

WELCH: Were you scared?

TAYLOR: No, I didn't know what I was doing or anything like that.

WELCH: Did you have children at the time? I know you mentioned your son earlier.

TAYLOR: Yes, I had some healthy. I had two boys and a girl, and a daughter...had the wild thing, that was all. Sorry about that I can't.

WELCH: Anything else?

TAYLOR: No, I just was trying to figure out so much, I guess. I know this is...jumped on board. Have you been on the tour? Do you know your work here?

WELCH: Um mum. No.

TAYLOR: Ok.

WELCH: Yeah.

TAYLOR: Do you have children by the way? May I ask you questions?

WELCH: Yeah.

TAYLOR: You married and have children or divorced or anything?

WELCH: No, I'm getting married for the first time June 11<sup>th</sup>.

TAYLOR: Congratulations.

WELCH: Thank you.

TAYLOR: You're getting married on June 11<sup>th</sup>?

WELCH: Uh huh. So.

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